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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000499

SIPDIS

STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID LAC/AA
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD DAN JOHNSON
NSC FOR TOM SHANNON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT DUARTE ABANDONS CABRAL'S PROMOTION
NOMINATION

REF: A. ASUNCION 453

[B](#). ASUNCION 370

[C](#). ASUNCION 301 AND PRECEDING

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Keane, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: President Duarte's Private Secretary, Minister Jose Maria Ibanez, confided to me on April 13 that Duarte has instructed the Colorado Party block in Congress to desist in efforts to promote Police Commissioner Aristides Cabral. He said this was confidential and must not be leaked. I said I would share the information only with those in my government with a need to know. Separately, the SENAD director told us that the plan is to withdraw Cabral's nomination if the Attorney General indicts him based on charges made by a Brazilian drug trafficker. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) Note: Foreign Minister Rachid told me on April 11 that she understood the Executive Branch had "withdrawn" Cabral's nomination from the Senate, and that she had so told NSC Senior Director Tom Shannon, among others. Vice President Luis Castiglioni has said publicly on April 10 that the Cabral nomination would be withdrawn and he told me that as well on April 4. However, the Senate President told me no such withdrawal had taken place, hence my call to Ibanez, who has been the most reliable source of information over the last two years.

[3](#). (C) Separately, Duarte told SENAD Chief Ibarra that Cabral would not be promoted, and that he had asked the Attorney General to indict Cabral based on the charges leveled against Cabral by Brazilian drug trafficker Jaime Amato. Cabral has been accused by Amato of accepting monthly bribes from drug traffickers, in addition to other crimes. Once Cabral is indicted, Duarte reportedly told the SENAD chief, his nomination would be formally withdrawn from the Senate.

[4](#). (C) The SENAD Chief also told our DEA Country Attache that Duarte has requested a public ceremony, with Duarte and me present, for a donation of counter-drug equipment we have ready to be handed over to SENAD.

[5](#). (C) Comment: The Senate's decision to remand Cabral's nomination to committee on March 31st (Ref A) was a setback for the President and the Colorado Party, but they also recognize the political cost of insisting on his promotion despite the cloud of narcotics-related corruption which envelopes him. The GOP's support for Cabral despite the public perception that he is drug tainted has been a topic of considerable private consternation in Asuncion society. While I am encouraged by the latest news, I will not rest assured until the promotion is withdrawn. I surmise that Duarte is seizing the SENAD donation as an opportunity to display that he continues to enjoy U.S. confidence and that U.S.-Paraguayan CD cooperation is unaffected by the Cabral episode.

KEANE